

What is claimed is:

1. An intercom unit comprising:
 - a housing;
 - a plurality of signal lights attached to the housing in a stacklight configuration;
 - a speaker connected to the housing;
 - a microphone connected to the housing; and
 - an activator connected to the housing and configured to activate the microphone.
2. The intercom unit of claim 1, wherein at least some of the signal lights are operatively connected to an external equipment and are configured to indicate operating characteristics of the equipment.
3. The intercom unit of claim 1, wherein at least one signal light is configured to indicate an audio signal that is at least one of received and transmitted by the intercom unit.
4. The intercom unit of claim 1, wherein the intercom unit further comprises at least one of an amplifier for amplifying a signal input to the speaker and an audio driver configured to process a signal received from the microphone.
5. The intercom unit of claim 1 further comprising:
 - a dual tone multi-frequency decoder configured to convert an analog

signal to a digital signal; and

a microcontroller operatively connected to the decoder and configured to receive the digital signal and input a signal to the speaker.

6. The intercom unit of claim 5 further comprising a lamp driver operatively connected to the microcontroller and configured to selectively operate one of the signal lights.

7. The intercom unit of claim 5, wherein the microcontroller has a distinct address.

8. The intercom unit of claim 5, wherein the decoder is also an encoder.

9. The intercom unit of claim 5, wherein the actuator is operatively connected to the microcontroller and configured to, when activated, cause at least one of: the speaker to convert to a microphone, an amplifier to convert to an audio driver, and the decoder to convert to an encoder.

10. The intercom unit of claim 1, wherein the intercom unit has a unique address that is changeable by at least one of: operating dip switches on the intercom unit, and operating a controller to alter an address associated with a microcontroller located in the intercom unit.

11. The intercom unit of claim 1, wherein the housing is comprised of a polycarbonate.

12. The intercom unit of claim 1, wherein the signal lights are configured to display light of differing colors.

13. The intercom unit of claim 12, wherein the signal lights display differing colors by illuminating different lights.

14. A communication system comprising:
an intercom unit comprising:
means for housing;
light emitting signaling means attached to the housing means;
means for emitting sound connected to the housing means;
means for inputting sound connected to the housing means; and
means for activating connected to the housing means and
configured to activate the sound inputting means;
means for controlling the system configured to communicate with the
intercom unit.

15. A method of making a communication system comprising:
providing an intercom system comprising a plurality of intercom units;
integrating the intercom units with a plurality of signal lights; and
adapting one of the signal lights to indicate how an equipment that is not
part of the intercom system is functioning.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising configuring a signal light to
indicate when an intercom unit is receiving an audio signal.

17. A method of communicating, comprising:
 - sending an audio signal over an intercom system, wherein the intercom system comprises a plurality of intercom units having a plurality of signal lights;
 - connecting the signal lights to sensors associated with an equipment not associated with the intercom system and configuring the signal lights to indicate operating characteristics of the equipment; and
 - controlling the intercom system with a controller.
18. The method of claim 17, further comprising:
 - connecting a signal light to a intercom unit to indicate when the intercom unit is receiving an audio signal.
19. A communication system comprising:
 - an intercom unit comprising:
 - a housing;
 - a plurality of signal lights attached to the housing;
 - a speaker connected to the housing;
 - a microphone connected to the housing; and
 - an activator connected to the housing and configured to activate the microphone;
 - a controller configured to communicate with the intercom unit.
20. The intercom unit of claim 19, wherein the controller is configured to communicate by an audio signal.